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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000774

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR S/SRAP HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR JEFFREY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2019
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, EAID, KDEM, PK, AF, TU
SUBJECT: SRAP HOLBROOKE'S GOT BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS: "THE
MORE TURKEY CAN DO THE BETTER"

REF: ANKARA 670

Classified By: Ambassador James Jeffrey, for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

1. (C) SUMMARY. In a May 18 meeting in Istanbul, SRAP Holbrooke pressed his Turkish MFA counterpart to increase Turkey's diplomatic, political, economic/reconstruction and military training activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in close coordination with the US. Holbrooke underscored that Turkey's role in the region is critical, given its close historical ties with both Afghanistan and Pakistan and its current efforts. MFA Deputy U/S Sinirlioglu readily agreed that Ankara and Washington share a common strategic perspective, and confirmed that Turkey would like to do much

more with the US in this region. Foreign Minister Davutoglu made similar points in his June 1 meeting in Washington with SRAP. This cable summarizes the Istanbul discussion and outlines possible GOT steps to implement SRAP's offer for a key relationship with Turkey. Such engagement is strongly supported by the Mission. However, it will require additional resources, high-level sustained attention by US officials, and a certain tolerance for likely Turkish deviations from the USG approach, at least at the micro level. END SUMMARY.

Holbrooke-Sinirlioglu Meeting

2. (C) On the margins of the May 18 SRAP gathering in Istanbul, Ambassador Holbrooke met with MFA Deputy U/S Sinirlioglu to review Turkey's role in our joint efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Holbrooke told Sinirlioglu that Turkey's role is critical, given its close relations with both countries, its historical contacts, and its current efforts. The USG and Turkey share a common strategic perspective on both countries, unlike many in the broader coalition, who see the entire effort as a foreign aid endeavor or as assistance to the US. Sinirlioglu agreed, and both concurred that the fallout from a collapsed Afghanistan and/or Pakistan would reverberate all the way to Turkey. Foreign Minister Davutoglu made similar points in his June 1 meeting in Washington with SRAP.

3. (C) Holbrooke stated that he was not suggesting that Turkey provide more troops, but rather increase its diplomatic, political, economic/reconstruction, and military training activities, in close coordination with the US. (Turkey is actually doubling its troop commitment to 1,900 in conjunction with the assumption of RC-Kabul command.) Sinirlioglu picked up immediately on the idea, agreed that our joint perspective is essentially the same ("we see eye to eye"), and confirmed that Turkey would like to do much more with us. Holbrooke noted in particular Turkish counter-insurgency (COIN) experience and, given strong Turk-Pak military ties, the possibility of enhanced Pak training by the Turks. He summed up the conversation with "the more you can do out there, the better."

Turkish Engagement

4. (C) As a baseline for what more we could see Turkey doing, following is an inventory of what Turkey is currently doing with Afghanistan and Pakistan:

-- Afghanistan support: Afghanistan is Turkey's largest net recipient of foreign assistance. Turkey pledged \$100 million at each of the last two Afghanistan donors conferences and has made significant contributions to Afghan health, education and scholarships, and agriculture, led in part by its PRT in Wardak Province.

-- Pakistan Support: Turkey pledged \$100 million at the 2009 Tokyo Donors Conference and is developing a support package for recent IDPs.

-- Military: Turkey has twice led ISAF and will resume command for a third time of RC-Kabul, boosting its troop contribution to about 1900. Turkey pledged at the NATO Summit \$1.5 million to the ANA Trust Fund, \$2 million to the helicopter bridging initiative, and, for election security, four military teams to RC North and one KC-135 tanker aircraft, and three additional OMLTs to Kabul.

-- Trilateral Summits: Since April 2007, Turkey has hosted three trilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan-Turkey summits. The last, on April 1, 2009, brought together the three countries'

Presidents, FMs, Chiefs of Staff and intelligence chiefs. Intel coordination between the three states has advanced significantly by the inclusion of intelligence chiefs in this forum, and Turkey has excellent bilateral intel relations with both services. Turkey sees its trilateral, focused on dialogue, as complementary to the more "actionable" US-led trilateral process.

-- Friends of a Democratic Pakistan: Turkey has offered to host the next meeting of the FODP in Istanbul.

-- Regional Summit: During the last trilateral summit, Presidents Karzai and Zardari asked Turkey to organize a regional Afghanistan-Pakistan support summit. The summit would include all of Afghanistan's neighbors, including Iran; the Turks have assured us that the US would have at least an observer role. This probably would not take place before October, after both the Afghanistan and Iran elections.

-- "NGO" Schools: Independent of, but apparently coordinated with/supported by elements in, the GOT, NGOs affiliated with the humanist, moderately Islamic Fethullah Gulen movement operate an extensive school system throughout both Afghanistan and, increasingly, Pakistan. Girls' schooling is a high priority. The education is of relatively high quality, focused on science, math and English instruction.

-- Strong political engagement with Afghanistan's ethnic Turkic (Uzbek, Turkmen, Hazara populations): Turkey has urged the Turkish populations to unify and support Afghanistan over narrow parochial interests, but believes new political structures are required in Afghanistan to ensure that all populations are treated equitably. Turkey has also hosted and provided medical treatment to General Abdul Rashid Dostum since late last year, isolating him from the Afghan political scene and promoting the independence and institutional development of Dostum's Junbesh party. Turkey has been receptive to our pleas to continue offering this "hospitality" to Dostum.

-- Strong mil-mil relations with Pakistan that include F-16 pilot exchanges and other joint operation activities. The Turks have offered to invite Afghan officers to participate in exercises, but the Pakistanis have not yet agreed.

Possible Areas for Increased Turkish Engagement, US-Turkish Cooperation

5. (C) These include:

-- The US-Turkey Combined Intelligence Fusion Cell provides a venue whereby Turkey and the US can cooperate to share actionable military intelligence against PKK fighters who seek to use northern Iraq as a safe haven from which to attack targets in Turkey. In November 2008, Turkey provided, at the request of CJCS Admiral Mullen, a brief to senior Pakistan military officers on how the Turkish experience might be germane in its own counter-insurgency operations.

-- We would seek to encourage the Turkish General Staff to build on this, with senior leaders experienced in their current COIN operation traveling to Pakistan to help troubleshoot Pakistan's current use of intelligence to combat insurgency, and over time to share Turkey's approach to "clear-hold-build as used against the PKK in southern Turkey.

-- Build on current intel coordination efforts.

-- Political engagement with moderate or "reconcilable" representatives of Afghan and/or Pakistani Taliban or other opposing militant forces, so long as the effort is Afghan or Pakistani-led.

-- Reconstruction Opportunity Zones: The Turks already have over \$2 billion in infrastructure contracts in Afghanistan;

Turkish industry is relatively well positioned to take advantage of ROZs; the Turkish national chamber of commerce organization (TOBB) has been urging ROZ passage. This would require significant US coordination, including with Congress, and relentless follow-through on the ground.

-- Enhance Turkey's contributions to Afghan and Pakistani education through more school construction, school security, additional Ministry of Education-run Turkish schools or universities, more scholarships for Afghan students to study in Turkey, and subtle USG support for more substantially

expanding the role in education -- especially girls' education -- for Fethullah Gulen-affiliated Turkish NGOs. (The movement's capacity is substantial, but not without controversy, especially with Turkey's military).

-- Leverage its position in the OIC and strengthening ties to the Arab world to increase financial support from the GCC states for Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Resources

6. (SBU) Embassy Ankara's political section is already stretched covering Turkey's multiple foreign policy arenas (Middle East, Iraq, EU, Caucasus, Iran, Russia, etc.) -- in particular given Turkey's new seat on the UN Security Council. An expanded US-Turkey joint effort on Afghanistan and Pakistan, while inarguably worthy, will tax our limited staffing and resources. We would recommend augmenting the Embassy's political line-up with an additional officer conversant on AF-PAK issues and able to liaise with both SRAP and Turkish Government officials who also are working on this region.

7. (C) At a more strategic level, such an enhanced role, which the Embassy strongly endorses, will require substantial personal involvement by top US leaders with Turkey, and a certain tolerance for Turkish deviations from the "US-school solution," at least a micro level. We have in fact tolerated just this in Turkey's extensive and deep relations with post-2003 Iraq, much to the benefit of all three nations.

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